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EDITORIAL COMMENT



THE POSITION OF THE MATRON IN TRAINING SCHOOL AND HOSPITAL

"To this subject was given most earnest attention at the Cologne Congress, and rightly so," Miss Dock tells us. "The foreign title 'Matron' is given to the woman whom we call 'Superintendent of Nurses,' and who, in other countries, often combines with her nursing oversight more household supervision and control than our superintendents of nurses usually possess. Because, perhaps, of her domestic functions, she often has great difficulty in developing and holding her position as head of the nursing staff, and in many European countries the matron and her sphere form the central point of hospital controversies. The medical staff often resent her appearance in the wards, and object strongly to her 'changing nurses in the wards.' Their ideal is to have head nurses responsible to themselves only. Hospital directors also begrudge authority 'in the hospital' to the matron, and would like to keep her a housekeeper only, or at least to limit her sphere to the Nurses' Home or professional school. Even Denmark, enlightened country though it is, has no matron as head of the whole nursing staff in large public hospitals, and there seems to be a growing preference among hospital men for what they call 'The Non-Matron System.' As under the most favorable conditions, the non-matron system means entire absence of systematic rotation through branches of hospital service for pupils, absence of systematic training, absence of care for nurses' health, and absence of that 'atmosphere' or spirit which can be felt in a hospital, European women

are naturally concerned and anxious about it. Under the most unfavorable conditions, the non-matron system results in a most deplorable morale. The leaders abroad are therefore bending all their energies to strengthening a correct idea of the matron's part in the hospital. Only the few most liberal men in each country are in sympathy with them. For this reason especially the death of Dr. Lande, in France, was a calamity. American and English matrons cannot do too much in upholding the hands of their foreign colleagues on this basic point. To advocate a non-matron system is to flout the very a, b, c of Miss Nightingale's teachings, and is an insult to the women who have transformed hospitals from the evil dens they once were, to their present usefulness."

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A GOOD and growing custom is that of holding several important committee meetings at one time of year, when persons who are members of more than one can be at hand. There are usually some such gatherings of executive and special committees in October and January of each winter season, but it is especially true of the time of the gathering of nurses for our national conventions. At that time not only are there conferences of members of the committees of the national and affiliated associations, but advantage is taken of the fact that many nurses are present, to call for representatives of more restricted interests, such as state Red Cross committees or for gatherings of the graduates of some school. Very often the most valued and best-known workers are obliged to forego all the social functions of the convention season because of these business engagements, which mean long sessions of earnest discussion and hard work. The very multiplicity of committees, a natural result of our growth and larger interests, makes it difficult to avoid conflicting appointments, and often a chairman who has been looking forward to at last getting her group of workers assembled finds she has not a sufficient number to transact business, because all are members of other and equally important committees.

Would it not be possible to have a more concerted plan of action by making the national secretary's desk a clearing house for appointments? If each chairman who intends calling a committee meeting in connection with the convention of the American Nurses' Association would notify the secretary of her intention some months ahead, giving her the names of her committee members, a schedule could be arranged by which committees could meet without interference with the convention proceedings or with each other.

It may be we are too sanguine in regard to the possibility of making such a working schedule, and that the national secretary would require

the experience and ability of a train despatcher to arrange all these conferences satisfactorily, but it seems to us the plan is worth trying. Another suggestion we have to offer in regard to it is, that all these committee meetings should be held on the days just preceding or just following the convention proper, so that officers and committee members might enjoy the meetings and meet the nurses who are present, between times. This informal social intercourse is, as we know, one of the most valuable elements of a large gathering. The workers need to learn the personal wishes and suggestions that some individuals are too timid to offer in public, and many a nurse has some problem at heart which she wishes to talk over with a more experienced woman if she but had the chance to do so.

PROGRESSIVE STATE WORK

It has always seemed to us that one of the reasons for the existence of a state association is that it should be a leader in educational or social work, and that by its example or active efforts local associations should be inspired to follow. Not all state associations achieve this ideal; some jog along contentedly, after securing state registration, without much more important work than a local association might undertake. There are occasional exceptions that show what can be done. The members of the Wisconsin State Association, at their annual meeting in October, decided on two distinct lines of work, simple enough in themselves yet of real importance. First, a nurse was appointed to visit the various cities and towns of the state, with a view to forming county associations. Second, resolutions were adopted protesting against the wearing of the uniform on the street or in public places. Copies of these resolutions will be sent to every training school in the state, so that none need be in doubt as to the attitude of the state association in the matter.

If the association succeeds in establishing a few strong county societies and in making the public use of a nurse's uniform a matter of reproach, it will have accomplished a good year's work.

We believe that in many of our associations programmes and proposed lines of work are too full to be practical. The minds of those present are bewildered by the multiplicity of duties set before them or by the interests appealing for their support, and they go home without any definite plan to put in action. If it were possible to confine ourselves to a few subjects for papers and discussion at each state or local meeting, each being well worked out and ably presented, we believe we should see better results.

MISS WALD HONORED

At the recent celebration of its seventy-fifth anniversary by Mt. Holyoke College, a number of honorary degrees were conferred, some of

them upon women who have made notable contributions to the progress of the world's work, women of whom Mary Lyon, who was a most progressive woman, would have been proud. One of these degrees, that of LL.D., was bestowed upon Miss Wald, of the Nurses' Settlement, New York City. In granting it President Wooley said: "Lillian D. Wald, friend of those who need friends, originator of far-reaching municipal and national movements for the care of the sick and the poor and little children, a citizen of whom our greatest American city may well be proud, we confer upon you the degree of Doctor of Laws and admit you to all its rights and privileges."

What a chorus of approval there would have been if the nurses of the country could have been present to voice their feelings in regard to this first honor of the kind granted to an American nurse. We all know how richly it has been deserved, by years of unceasing devotion, first to the Nurses' Settlement, which she founded, and which has been the model for many others, then to wider fields of philanthropy. It was she who inaugurated the idea which has grown into the Children's Bureau, and it is fitting that Miss Lathrop, the head of the Bureau, should have been honored with a degree at the same time and place.

AMERICAN VIGILANCE ASSOCIATION BIBLIOGRAPHY

IN the official report of the proceedings of the American Nurses' Association, published in the August JOURNAL, there appeared a statement, made by Miss Crandall, in her discussion of the paper, "Teaching of Sex Hygiene," that a pamphlet was issued by the American Vigilance Association of New York City which gives a carefully censored bibliography of the literature on this subject. Miss Crandall recommended this to her audience and gave the price as twenty-five cents. Evidently many nurses took advantage of this information, for we have in hand a letter written by the librarian of the Vigilance Association, in response to an inquirer, stating that a mistake was made in regard to the price, which should be fifty cents, and that letters are being received "daily from nurses throughout the country," and regretting that the mistake was being further advertised through the pages of this JOURNAL.

We hasten to correct the mistake and urge nurses to remember to send fifty cents, instead of twenty-five, when ordering the pamphlet. We cannot but reflect, however, that in spite of the annoyance caused by an innocent misstatement, if the Vigilance Association wishes to promote its work and to make its literature widely known, it should welcome this

army of interested workers scattered broadcast over the land. It is encouraging to us to know that a statement of this sort, made once in public and printed once as a report, should have resulted in so many inquiries.

AMERICAN FEDERATION FOR SEX HYGIENE

WHILE on the subject of sex hygiene, we should like to put before our readers, once more, in an abbreviated form, a summary of the objects and proposed methods of work of the Federation for Sex Hygiene, sent us by Dr. Prince Morrow, its president, who feels that much interest was aroused in the exhibit prepared for the Congress of Hygiene and Demography in Washington, and that this interest should be followed by an intelligent understanding of the society's aims.

They are: enlightenment of the public in regard to the prevalence and danger from venereal disease; education of parents to the importance of instructing their children; education of young people in the physiology and hygiene of sex. Under this last-named heading come the various educational methods being used or inaugurated, such as lectures, literature, exhibits, school instruction, the reporting of venereal disease to boards of health, and the study of causes of prostitution.

In all this work nurses are vitally interested, and in much of it they can be active helpers.

ANOTHER UNIVERSITY OFFERS A COURSE IN NURSING

UNDER the Colorado items in *Nursing News* is an outline of a course inaugurated this year at the University of Colorado, at Denver, in Social and Home Service, and the subjects embraced are those which are presented in many of the preliminary courses in training schools, but without any of the practical work. Credit will be given by some of the Colorado hospitals to nurses who have completed the year's work offered, and it is a step toward the central nursing college so desired.

THREE NOTABLE CONVENTIONS

SINCE the last issue of the *JOURNAL*, three conventions have been held which have been of great interest to many nurses, the subjects discussed at all three being so closely allied to nursing work: the conference on Infant Mortality at Cleveland, the Congress of Hygiene and Demography at Washington, and the meeting of the American Hospital Association at Detroit.

In our department of *Nursing News* will be found reports of the first two of these conventions, many of whose subjects for consideration were similar, and we are happy to be able to give, also, the first part

of an exceedingly valuable paper read at Detroit by Rabbi Franklin of that city, a man of wide influence, whose opinions have weight with all social workers. This paper reached us so late that it was impossible to make space for it all this month, but it will be concluded in the December JOURNAL.

THE RELIEF FUND CALENDAR

WE hope nurses everywhere will note the lists, published in this and the October JOURNAL, of places scattered throughout the country where the Relief Fund calendar is for sale. There is hardly a nursing centre unrepresented, and it is hoped the sale will be large and the fund greatly increased by the revenue, while those who purchase the calendars will be well repaid by its interest and worth.

We want to remind the local associations that this Relief Fund should be one of their main objects in this year's work, that we may soon begin to help those who need its aid. It is hoped that thousands of small contributions by individuals may be made, so that each nurse may feel that she has had a share in it.

HISTORY OF NURSING COMPLETED

As we go to press the announcement reaches us of the completion of the "History of Nursing" by Miss Nutting and Miss Dock by the publication of Volumes III and IV. It had been expected that the third volume would complete the set, but the addition of the fourth brings the history closely up to date. As is the case with the first two volumes, these may be bought separately, or together, or with the others. All royalties go to the treasury of the International Council of Nurses. No library for nurses' use will be complete without these valuable books.